



## TAMPA — TAR and TERROR

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New York City

, who was  
Klan

Pri-

438



## **TAMPA — TAR and TERROR**

A man is dead.

Not an ordinary man.

A man who gave his life for you.

What? How could he? You never knew him?

Then meet Joseph Shoemaker, a kindly, good-natured, soft-spoken man, tall, heavy-set, dark-haired, who came to Florida from his Vermont home in May of 1935, never to return.

Meet Joseph Shoemaker, who was killed because he said:

**"There is neither peace nor security in America today—  
and there cannot be—until we provide work for the great  
mass of the unemployed."**

Joseph Shoemaker, killed because of his great crime—helping to organize workers, employed and unemployed.

Joseph Shoemaker, who believed in a system of production for use instead of profit, who wanted to rest his case with a "democratic decision" from the people of America.

Joseph Shoemaker, who left home one night not long ago, never suspecting that he was being framed by Tampa cops and Ku Klux Klan night riders; never suspecting—

*That* he would be illegally arrested, then kidnaped and flogged;

*That* an inhuman gang would deliberately burn him, then pour boiling tar on his body;

*That* he would lie in a ditch for seven hours, unconscious, naked and half frozen;

*That* an armed guard would keep vigil outside his hospital door, lest his kidnapers, not satisfied with battering his head and throat, try to silence him;

*That* he would finally succumb, after a nine-day battle for life.

### **POLICE RAID PRIVATE HOME**

On the evening of November 30, 1935, six men were seated around a table in the home of Mrs. A. M. Herald, matron of the Hillsborough County, (Tampa) jail. The men were framing a constitution and by-laws for the Modern Democrats, a liberal political organization formed by Shoemaker. They were patterning their constitution after that of the American Legion.



**JOSEPH SHOEMAKER**

*Gallant fighter for the rights and liberties of American labor, who was  
tortured and murdered by Tampa police and Ku Klux Klan*



Mr. Herald and his daughter were listening to the radio in the next room.

Suddenly, seven police officers entered. Three came in the front door and four in the back. Guns were drawn, papers were grabbed, the men were searched.

"Why the raid?" the police were asked.

"Orders from the chief, chief of detectives," said Sergeant "Smitty" Brown. Chief of Detectives Bush, however, told reporters later, "If anybody said I ordered the raid, they are mistaken. I didn't know anything about it."

The six men were piled into police cars, driven to headquarters, there booked and grilled. Under the head "Why Held" two words were written: "Investigate communists."

Who were these "communists"?

Joseph A. Shoemaker, 47, chairman Modern Democrats, formerly a member of the Socialist Party.

Eugene F. Poulnot, member of the Socialist Party and chairman of the Florida Workers' Alliance, who tries to support his family of seven on a WPA wage of \$30 a month. Poulnot was formerly president of the Pressmen's Union, A. F. of L.

Sam D. Rogers, Socialist, with an M.D. degree from Loyola College, now a WPA worker.

Walter Roush, president of the Sulphur Springs Workers Alliance, an unemployed organization, and on the state executive committee of the Socialist Party.

Charles E. Jensen, state secretary of the Socialist Party.

And the sixth man—J. A. McCaskill, a city fireman whose father is a policeman. He deserves special mention, according to the *Tampa Tribune* of December 12, which states:

**"The state investigators have found evidence that leads them to believe Shoemaker and the others were framed. When the meeting started, five men were there, but Poulnot was missing. So one of the five got into his car and went for Poulnot. A moment later Brown and Wyman raided the place."**

McCaskill was the man who went to so much trouble to get Poulnot. His name was scratched from the police detention book, and "O. R. Sauls" written in its place. There is no such person in Tampa! McCaskill was immediately released.

At the police station, the other men were questioned, then released *one by one*. Two of them returned home unharmed, but the other three—

### KIDNAPING—TORTURE—MURDER

Poulnot was suspicious when the police returned his wallet, told him he was free, for he knew unemployed leaders were usually held in jail for hours or several days. One of the plainclothesmen took Poulnot to a car parked at the Florida Avenue entrance to the jail, and said, "Let's get in. We've caused you enough trouble, we'll take you back."

Poulnot noticed a man at the wheel, another man in back holding the door open. He said he'd walk home.

"Don't argue with him," said the man in back. "Put the ——— in here."

The officer grabbed Poulnot's collar. Poulnot screamed and resisted. A Police Lieutenant, who was standing ten feet away, according to Poulnot, made no move to aid him. Later, some policemen were to testify they heard the screams, others were to swear they hadn't. When a crowd gathered, the kidnapers lied, "We're taking a crazy man to Chattahoochee."

Poulnot was pushed to the floor of the car, a foot placed on his neck. The car stopped in Tampa's warehouse district and a bag was put over Poulnot's head. Other cars were there. Drinks were passed around.

Another car drove up and Shoemaker, who weighed 230 pounds, was dumped on top of Poulnot. A man hit Shoemaker on the neck with a blunt instrument.

The cars started up, drove to the Bloomingdale district, near Brandon, fourteen miles from Tampa. When they arrived, Rogers was already being flogged.

While Rogers was in jail, he had heard Poulnot yell for help, so when he was released and a policeman took his arm and said, "Come, I will take you to your room," he knew what to expect. But he showed no fear. He was put into a car "in the driveway between the police station and the city hall," and driven to the dock front. There he was blindfolded, shifted to another car, told: "Get down on your hands and knees. Don't make any noise or it will be over with you." A man put his foot on Rogers' neck, a revolver against his ear.



When the car stopped, Rogers was grabbed, stripped, placed over a log. His hands and feet were held while he was beaten with a rough hose. Then tar was applied to his abdomen, sexual organs and thighs.

Poulnot was flogged with a chain and a rawhide, then tarred and feathered. He went unconscious several times. Once, as he "came to," a man said: "The —— is faking. Let's give it to him."

All the tortures that Shoemaker went through will never be known. He was too horribly mutilated to ever tell. Investigators agreed later that boiling tar had been poured on his body and had burned into his lacerated flesh. When brought to the Centro Espanol Hospital his entire body was black from tar. For seven hours he had lain outside, unconscious on a night suddenly turned cold. For hours after he was brought to the hospital, it was possible to warm him only with hot water bottles. His right leg had been held over a fire—burned and lacerated.

Doctors visting other patients in the hospital, looked into his room, were shocked.

Said one leading Tampa surgeon:

**"He is horribly mutilated. I wouldn't beat a hog the way that man was whipped. He was beaten until he is paralyzed on one side, probably from blows on the head. He cannot say anything to you; he does not know what happened. He can't use one arm, and I doubt if three square feet would cover the total area of bloodshot bruises on his body, not counting the parts injured only by tar."**

Abandoned in the woods when their assailants fled, the three victims started back to Tampa, but Shoemaker was too weak, and his two comrades left him, went on to summon aid. His brother, Jack Shoemaker, former commander of the Tampa American Legion, with whom Rogers immediately returned, found him, took him to the hospital.

For nine days he hung between life and death, suffering horrible agony. In a desperate attempt to save his life, his foot was amputated. He died soon after.

### OUTRAGED PROTEST

People in Tampa, in Florida, throughout America, began to ask: "Why were they kidnaped?"

## THE KU KLUX KLAN RIDES AGAIN Your Country Is Calling You

The Klan Rides to  
Save America!



Stop! Look! Listen!  
Think! Pray!

### Communism Must Go! America, Wake Up!

#### YOUR COUNTRY

Love, Peace, Freedom, God.  
Home, Husband, Wife and Children.  
Free Schools of Patriotic Thought.  
Free Speech and Free Press.  
Government of the People.  
The Stars and Stripes Forever.  
Right to Worship God as we Please.

#### COMMUNISM

Hate, Bondage, Prison and Starvation.  
Free Love, Children State Property.  
Dictated Thought by a Few.  
Fear to Express Thought by Speech or Press.  
Overthrow of All Government.  
The Red Flag of Destruction.  
Overthrow of All Religion.

You have read of "The midnight ride of Paul Revere," calling the Minute Men to arms to free us from tyranny.

This is the MIDNIGHT RIDE OF THE KU KLUX KLAN, calling you to save our country and its institutions.

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is determined to drive out of the United States these vicious, alien radicals and to eradicate their radical thought from every rank, class and group of the American people, through a nation-wide concerted campaign. In this job, they are entitled to the hearty support of every true American citizen.

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan invites and pleads for your help to save our country before it is too late. We do not want money but we need YOU and your support.

#### MODERN COMMUNISM CHALLENGES ALL DECENCY AND CIVILIZATION

This organization is determined to fight to the last ditch and the last man against any and all attacks on our government and its American institutions. If you are a Red Blooded, Native Born, American Citizen and believe with us, fill out the coupon below.

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Tear off on this line and mail.

P. O. Box 1975,  
Tampa, Florida.

I want to help save our country and am ready to ride with you.

NAME .....

OCCUPATION ..... (State where employed)

RESIDENCE ADDRESS .....

*Several weeks after the kidnaping of Shoemaker, Poulnot and Rogers and the murder of Shoemaker by Tampa police and Klansmen, the above leaflet was widely distributed in Tampa. It speaks for itself*



In part this question was answered in less than two weeks when the men arrested for the murder and kidnaping were released on bail. *And the bail was supplied by labor-hating, anti-union cigar manufacturers!*

Tampa provides 65% of the cigars consumed in America. The Tampa cigar bosses carry on a constant campaign to prevent the organization of cigar-makers unions. In 1910 five labor organizers were lynched in the city. In 1931 a manufacturers' secret committee staged an intensive anti-union drive which is still going on. Anita Brenner, writing in the *Nation* of December 7, 1932, revealed how the Tampa police and vigilantes aid in hindering labor organization. The gangsters and vigilantes bred by the corrupt conditions of the city are always ready to do an industrial or political "job."

The Committee for the Defense of Civil Rights in Tampa was formed, with Norman Thomas as chairman. David Lasser, chairman of the Workers Alliance of America, was sent to Florida by the Committee as special investigator.

William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, after hearing the details of the case from representatives of the committee, threatened to move the 1936 A. F. of L. convention from Tampa to another city unless the guilty persons were fully punished.

Hundreds of A. F. of L. unions, locals, internationals, city and state bodies, have added their voices to the mounting roar of protest. Tampa unions and the Tampa central labor body demanded forthright action.

Day after day the two Tampa newspapers printed protests from outraged citizens, flashed the story across page one.

On December 16 Norman Thomas publicly charged the Ku Klux Klan with having a hand in the crime. Imperial Wizard Evans, from his marble-columned home in Atlanta, denied the charge and spoke of Thomas as "a dangerous man."

At first the city administration expressed pious horror and "went through the motions." Then came the wave of protests and charges. The sheriff, who is not a city appointee, moved to track down the criminals.

Nine days after Shoemaker died six city policemen were arrested, charged with murder and kidnaping. They were released

on \$9,500 bail each, supplied by certain cigar manufacturers. Four days later two more arrests were made, this time of members of the Ku Klux Klan. Soon a third Klansman was jailed. Norman Thomas' charges were proved to be true.

## WHAT WENT BEFORE

Kidnaping is a favorite Florida sport.

In the last six years, twelve men have been kidnaped in Tampa and surrounding towns.

The black record reads as follows:

James F. Bickers, St. Petersburg attorney, flogged in 1929. A Tampa gang was blamed.

H. R. Jameson of Tarpon Springs, Owen Jackson of Elfers, and W. R. Oxford, a paint shop owner of St. Petersburg,—all kidnaped and beaten in 1931.

Constable F. A. Howard of Ballast Point was taken from his home in 1931 by men posing as federal officers. He was handcuffed, taken to a lonely spot north of Tampashores, and beaten. The handcuffs indicated collusion on the part of the police.

Frank Norman, active in the United Citrus Workers' Union and representative of the International Labor Defense, disappeared under much the same circumstances as Howard.

Robert M. Cargell, lawyer, was seized on a St. Petersburg street by a band of five men last March 20, taken to a wooded section north of Clearwater, and there mutilated.

From a line up of twenty men in Tampa police headquarters, Cargell picked F. W. Switzer, suspended city policeman, under indictment for Shoemaker's murder, as one of his kidnapers. Switzer is now under \$5,000 bond in the Cargell case, \$7,500 for Shoemaker's death, and \$1,000 each for kidnaping Rogers and Poulnot—a grand total of \$14,500 on his head.

Cargell claims: "My case and the Tampa flogging murder are so remarkably similar they cannot be dismissed as mere coincidence."

In circumstances similar to the Shoemaker case, S. G. Crawford, and a man named Gorden were arrested in 1933 at a labor meeting, taken to police headquarters for questioning on alleged communistic activities, then seized and beaten.



It is known that the Ku Klux Klan held a state convention in full regalia at Clearwater several months ago. Rumors are current in Tampa today that Shoemaker, Poulnot and Rogers were only three "on a list of 20 to be given the works." It is definitely known that a Justice of the Peace, from a Tampa suburb, recently told Shoemaker, "We'll need some hangings to get rid of you Reds."

This man is a Klansman. He was downstairs in the jail the night Shoemaker was kidnaped!

### KLAN AND POLICE "COOPERATION"

This is not the first case in which the Klan and the police have "cooperated." Everyone in Tampa concedes that the police and fire departments are filled with Klansmen. It is even said that one must belong to the hooded mob in order to become a cop.

Last October, Police Chief Tittsworth sent two cops, one of them "Smitty" Brown, who led the murder raid, to pick up "for questioning" Walter T. Burrell, English teacher at Hillsborough High School. Without a warrant, the cops nabbed Burrell as he was engaged in the subversive task of coaching the high school football team. The great Tittsworth questioned him for two hours concerning some remarks he had made in one of his classes. Tittsworth decided, finally, that Burrell was not a communist, though he warned Burrell that he wasn't a good citizen.

Burrell happens to be a registered Democrat, who came to Tampa seven years ago from Montana. When fellow-teachers protested the arrest, czar Tittsworth promised an apology—which never came.

And at the police station there is no record of Burrell's arrest!

After the Shoemaker kidnaping a series of remarkable statements came from the mouth of Tittsworth.

The police chief claimed that he received the first news of the kidnaping from the *Tampa Tribune* two days after the flogging.

A little later, the chief said his officers did not know whom they were arresting at the Herald home. "All they were told was that a group of dangerous communists was holding a meeting, and that this group was armed."



*Palbearers carrying the body of Joseph Shoemaker to the hearse after funeral services attended by hundreds*



The source of this police "tip" has never been disclosed. There is no record of it at headquarters. The police invaded the Herald home without a warrant. "They had no right under the law to enter that home. They had no authority for the arrest of anyone there," says the *Tampa Tribune* editorially.

Next Tittsworth morsel was his statement that his investigation "conclusively established" that no policemen had participated "directly or indirectly" in the flogging. The *Tampa Tribune* ridiculed this, said, "The flogging murder case really dates from the invasion, by police, of the home of A. M. Herald."

Final Tittsworth tidbit was a statement that the victims "had not been hurt anything like the newspapers had stated." The chief went on to say that he had evidence—"not yet written up"—that Rogers and Poulnot were seen at a filling station four hours after they were kidnaped, that both were fully dressed, their hair not even mussed, and they "were buying wine."

Tittsworth was later removed by the Mayor, and he is now busy aiding the defense, whose chief attorney is the Mayor's brother-in-law!

### AN \$18,000,000 INDUSTRY

It is ironical that one of the provisions of Tampa's incorporation papers eighty-one years ago was this:

"To prevent and abate nuisances; to restrain and prevent gambling."

For gambling is Tampa's largest industry today, grossing in a month what cigar manufacturing—the city's second largest industry—does in a year. \$18,000,000 a year is not to be sneezed at. That is why the politicians get their rake-off. That is why the city resembles an armed camp on election day. Last year Governor Sholtz sent in the militia. On primary day in September, 1,100 special deputies were recruited and armed with shotguns, pistols, and hoe handles.

Three of these deputies were Arlie F. Gillian, grave caretaker, Ed Spivey, typewriter repairman, and James Dean, electrician, all from Orlando, all Klansmen, and all indicted for Shoemaker's murder. Gillian was a former state officer of the Klan. He and Spivey were taken through Tampa in a police car all primary day; then were released 10 apiece at the police station.

It would be difficult to find a single election in the last ten years in which votes were not stolen. It is common knowledge that city and county elections are crooked. Time and again, men have been indicted for vote frauds, but the inevitable whitewash has always followed. Sam E. Crosby, one of the policemen arrested for the Shoemaker murder, was added to the police force the day after the kidnaping—after his acquittal in criminal courts on a vote fraud charge!

The Special Grand Jury called in to solve the Shoemaker case was also instructed to clean out the racketeers. Early witnesses claimed that more than 400 liquor stores were thriving, although only 53 licenses had ever been issued. These witnesses also gave evidence of more than 78 gambling houses.

In the September primary of last year an opposition candidate, backed by Governor Sholtz, ran without success against Mayor Chancey. After the primary, Shoemaker formed the Modern Democrats, which put up Miller A. Stephens against Chancey in the final election. The Modern Democrats made a remarkable showing and claim they would have won in an honest election. Not only were votes stolen from Stephens at the point of guns, but thousands of non-existent votes were clocked up for Chancey.

All parties but the Democratic party are barred from the ballot in Florida. The Socialists backed the Modern Democrats.

It was the graft and corruption of Tampa's political chiefs and underworld, as well as the cooperation between the Klan and police, which led to the brazen kidnaping of men who sought only to organize those on relief, turn the gambling ring out of politics.

### PROTESTS MOUNT

Public opinion is running high against Klan activity. The American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Tampa Bar Association, the Chamber of Commerce, the Tampa Ministerial Association and a dozen civic and church groups have joined with the county Teachers' Federation and the Central Trades and Labor Assembly in demanding action on the murder case and a cleanup of gambling.

The American Civil Liberties Union, early in the case, offered \$1,000 for the arrest and conviction of the kidnapers. \$2,500 was added to this reward by the Tampa Board of Aldermen.



William Green has demanded full investigation and punishment, threatening that "the American Federation of Labor may find it necessary to change the holding of the convention in November, 1936, to some other city . . ." William Green also sent a request to Wendell Heaton, head of the Florida State Federation of Labor, to investigate the kidnaping. Heaton reported back that organized labor was not involved in the case, and that the federation convention should not be shifted. Heaton forgot to add that he, himself, was in politics, holding down a job as state industrial commissioner. This reply did not satisfy Green, who re-iterated his protests and asked Heaton to do likewise.

In the past, many "good citizens" of Tampa have either participated in the gambling and election frauds, or have condoned them. Today, all Tampa is aroused. There is a growing realization that fascism may come to the land of orange groves in white hoods instead of brown shirts.

### WHITEWASH?

But many Tampans are cynical. They have seen too much whitewash in the past few years. Their attitude is best expressed by a billboard in a local lumber yard: "Tar Today—Whitewash Tomorrow." The Florida press has the same attitude. Editorial after editorial, in paper after paper, poses this one question: "Will Tampa whitewash this case, too?"

Four years ago, the same *Tampa Tribune*, which now is clamoring for action, supported the cigar manufacturers in their ruthless suppression of unionism, in their frameups, kidnapings and deportations of labor men. But the violence initiated by the employers and kept alive by the Klan is now causing consternation among some who tolerated it. Unfavorable publicity has hurt Tampa. It is keeping industry from the city. It is keeping tourists from the city.

Nine mobsters have been indicted for the kidnap-murder—six policemen and three other Klansmen. But an indictment is not a conviction. *A number of prominent cigar manufacturers put up bail for the indicted men.* There is no question but that they have secret backing of some of the very people who are protesting vigorously against the crime in public! There is grave possibility that before the trial, or during the trial (in February) some

new political deal will be arranged. A few men may be made the scapegoats. They may be sent to jail for short terms—for which they will be well repaid!

To combat this possibility, the Committee for the Defense of Civil Rights in Tampa has been formed!

### IT'S UP TO YOU!

The case must not die down. Investigation must proceed. More evidence must be dug up. To do this, the Committee has its own men in the field. Here is a chance not only to fight for the right to organize the working class and for civil rights in Tampa, but also to wipe out the gangsterism of the Ku Klux Klan. It is a chance to show the Klan and their fellow vigilantes throughout the country, to show the night riders of the South that they can't get away with their mobsterisms any more.

Will Tampa wipe out the ugly mask of an American fascism that lurks beneath the white hood?

Will the murderers of Joseph Shoemaker be convicted?

*The answer is up to you.*

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### What You Can Do to Help:

1. Protest individually—or have your union or any other organization protest and demand action from:

Mayor R. E. L. Chancey, Tampa, Florida  
Governor Dave Sholtz, Tallahassee, Florida

2. Order more of these pamphlets, sell them to your friends, and enlist them in this fight.

3. Send contributions to finance the Committee's work to

NORMAN THOMAS, Chairman  
MARY FOX, Treasurer

COMMITTEE For The DEFENSE OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN TAMPA  
Room 506, 112 East 19th Street, New York City



*Additional copies of this pamphlet may be obtained from the Committee or from any of the organizations constituting the*

COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN TAMPA

Norman Thomas, *Chairman*

ROOM 506, 112 EAST 19TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

Labor and Socialist Defense Committee

League for Industrial Democracy

American Civil Liberties Union

General Defense Committee

Non-Partisan Labor Defense

Emergency Committee for Strikers' Relief

Workers Alliance of America

Negro Labor Committee

New York Dressmakers Joint Board, I.L.G.W.U.

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